



*Miami-Dade County*

*Commission  
on  
Ethics  
&  
Public  
Trust*

*2005 Annual Report*



## **ETHICS COMMISSIONERS**

Kerry E. Rosenthal, Chair  
Gail A. Dotson, Vice-Chair  
Dawn E. Addy  
Judge Seymour Gelber  
Brenda Rivera

**ROBERT MEYERS**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

**MICHAEL P. MURAWSKI**  
ADVOCATE

**ARDYTH WALKER**  
STAFF GENERAL COUNSEL

April 1, 2006

Honorable Mayor Carlos Alvarez  
Honorable Board Members of the County Commission  
Mr. George Burgess, County Manager  
Miami-Dade County Citizens

The Miami-Dade County Commission on Ethics & Public Trust is pleased to present its 2005 Annual Report.

In 2005, as in previous years, the Ethics Commission allocated significant resources to its four major functions—advice-giving, investigations and enforcement, community education and outreach, and policy and legislative activities. With an increase of an additional employee, the Ethics Commission had its most productive year ever. Requests for opinions, training, and presentations by staff grew at a steady rate in 2005. The number of cases opened and investigations initiated was at an all-time high. Lastly, the media ethics conference was by far the most successful conference put on by the Ethics Commission in its seven year history.

Community collaborations remained a cornerstone of many of our outreach activities. Specifically, the Ethics Commission collaborated with some of the major universities and colleges located in Miami-Dade on projects ranging from environmental ethics to media ethics to civic engagement. The Ethics Commission maintained its leadership role in the activities of the Ethics Coalition as it spearheaded an ethics series on Cable-Tap television and continued to hold ethics debates. In total, the Ethics Commission sponsored approximately 200 workshops, seminars, training sessions, and other presentations.

In the area of advice-giving, the Ethics Commission responded to approximately 340 formal and informal requests for opinions. In addition, the Ethics Commission improved dissemination of its opinions. Recent opinions, which are posted regularly on the Ethics Commission



website, are now sent directly to County Ethics Officers as well.

Investigations and other enforcement actions remain a critical component of our operations. More cases were opened in 2005 than in any other year, and more than 50 complaints were filed. Furthermore, the Ethics Commission began the arduous task of conducting post-election audits of candidates who ran for County office and received distributions from the Election Campaign Financing Trust Fund.

On the legislative front, the Ethics Commission supported policy changes at the County level to increase transparency and openness in government and create stiffer penalties for violators of County ethics ordinances. The Ethics Commission also continued to offer its guidance to municipalities interested in strengthening existing ethics laws or adopting “good government” laws, as well as assisting new municipalities interested in promoting ethics in their charters.

The Ethics Commission received special recognition in 2005 from two prestigious organizations—Transparency International (TI) and the National Association of Counties (NACo) for its Model Student Ethics Commission Program. The Model Student Ethics Commission Program, which garnered an Achievement Award from NACo, was also the only program TI recognized in the United States.

As always, we appreciate your support of our endeavors to raise the standard of public service in Miami-Dade County.

Sincerely,

Robert Meyers  
Executive Director

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

---

Mission	1
Functions & Authority	1
History	2
Commission Members	3
Staff & Budget	6
Education & Outreach	7
Enforcement Procedure	11
Formal Complaint Process	12
Advice-Giving Actions	13
Inquiries Summary	14
Enforcement Summary	15
Legislative Activities & Initiatives	16
Goals for 2006	17



# MISSION STATEMENT

---

The Ethics Commission was founded on the principle that integrity is essential to both the governmental decision-making process and the process whereby candidates are elected. Toward this end, we seek to strictly enforce the ethics ordinances within our purview. Another critical component of our mandate includes educating both the public as well as those serving in government. Each group has an important role to play in ensuring that our community leaders and staff are accountable and public trust in them is warranted. Only by requiring the highest ethical behavior from those in public service can fairness, openness, and transparency in government be achieved.

## FUNCTIONS & AUTHORITY

The Ethics Commission has jurisdiction in both Miami-Dade County and the 35 municipalities within its borders, provided the subject matter falls within one of the following ordinances under its authority:

**Conflict of Interest and Code of Ethics Ordinance**  
**Election Campaign Financing Trust Fund Ordinance**  
**Citizens' Bill of Rights**  
**Ethical Campaign Practices Ordinance**

Our specific statutory authority is derived from Miami-Dade County Code §2-1072. This ordinance grants the Ethics Commission the power to review, interpret, enforce, and render opinions regarding the above-mentioned County ordinances as well as municipal ordinances.

# HISTORY

---

In 1996, the citizens of Miami-Dade County voted to amend the Home Rule Charter to create an Ethics Commission. Subsequently, the Board of County Commissioners, through Ordinance 97-105, established the Commission on Ethics & Public Trust, an independent agency with advice-giving and quasi-judicial powers.

The Ethics Commission is composed of five volunteer members who serve staggered terms of four years each. Members are appointed by the following individuals or institutions:

**Chief Judge of the Eleventh Judicial Circuit**—two appointments with the following qualifications:

- (1) Former Federal Judge, or former U.S. Magistrate, or former State Court Judge
- (2) Former U.S. Attorney or Assistant U.S. Attorney, former State or Assistant State Attorney, former County or Assistant County Attorney, or former City or Assistant City Attorney.

**Dean of the University of Miami School of Law and Dean of the St. Thomas University School of Law**—one shared appointment with the following qualifications:

Faculty member from the law school who has taught a course in professional legal ethics or who has published or performed services in the field of professional legal ethics.

**Miami-Dade League of Cities**—one appointment with the following qualifications:  
Member who has held local elective office prior to appointment.

**Director of the Florida International University Center for Labor Research and Studies**—one appointment.

Each member must be a resident of Miami-Dade County. Additionally, while serving on the Commission, each member cannot hold or campaign for an elective office or hold office in any political party or political committee.

The Ethics Commission is empowered to appoint the Executive Director, who must be a member of the Florida Bar. Robert Meyers was named Executive Director in 1998.

# COMMISSION MEMBERS

---

## **KERRY E. ROSENTHAL, CHAIR**

Kerry Rosenthal was appointed by the Miami-Dade League of Cities in 1998. Mr. Rosenthal is a Miami attorney and partner with the law firm of Rosenthal, Rosenthal, Rasco. His primary areas of practice include real estate and development, business transactions, and corporations.

In addition to his role as Chair of the Ethics Commission, Mr. Rosenthal also serves on the Real Estate Certification Committee of the Florida Bar and as pro-bono legal counsel for Stop Hunger, Inc. He is a former Director and President of the North Dade Bar Association and former Vice-Mayor and Councilman of the Town of Golden Beach. He is active in several bar associations and charitable organizations.

Mr. Rosenthal received his B.A. degree from the University of Florida and his Juris Doctorate degree from the University of Miami.

## **GAIL ASH DOTSON, VICE-CHAIR**

Gail A. Dotson was appointed in December 2001 by Chief Judge Joseph P. Farina of the Eleventh Circuit. Currently, Ms. Dotson is an attorney with the law firm of Wagenfeld Levine; her practice deals primarily with workers' compensation issues. Previously, Ms. Dotson was the Assistant Dean in the Career Planning and Placement Department of Florida International University College of Law.

Ms. Dotson also served as the Director of Law Development and Alumni Relations at the University of Miami School of Law. A graduate of the University of Miami School of Law, Ms. Dotson was formerly an associate attorney with Fowler, White, Burnett, Hurley, Banick & Strickroot, P.A., and an assistant attorney in the Miami-Dade County Attorney's Office, where her focus was in administrative advocacy and commercial litigation. She is a member of the Florida Association of Women Lawyers, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, and a graduate of Leadership Miami, Class of 1987.

In addition to her law degree, Ms. Dotson holds a B.S. degree from Florida A & M University and a Master's in Business Administration from Nova Southeastern University.

## **DAWN E. ADDY**

Dawn E. Addy, Ph.D., serves as Director of the Center for Labor Research and Studies at Florida International University (FIU). Professor Addy's academic efforts have focused primarily on issues of workplace diversity and community building. She has designed specialized training programs, curricula, and other materials in numerous areas, including harassment, cultural diversity, workplace violence, conflict resolution, effective communication skills, problem solving, leadership skills, electronic publishing skills, labor law, the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Family and Medical Leave Act, HIV-AIDS, stress and self-image, bridging the gender gap, workplace literacy, and adult education techniques. She served on the Equal Opportunity Board for Miami-Dade County for five years prior to her appointment on the Ethics Commission in the fall of 2001.

Prior to her work at FIU, Dr. Addy was on the faculty of the Labor Education Service of the Industrial Relations Center at the University of Minnesota. She completed her graduate work at the University of Minnesota, earning a Master's degree in Industrial Relations and a Ph.D. in Work, Community, and Family Education. She is currently president of the group "Many Voices: One Community," which facilitates dialogue on issues of racism and immigration throughout southern Florida. Dr. Addy also serves on the Access and Equity Committee for FIU as Diversity Committee Chair.

## **JUDGE SEYMOUR GELBER**

Judge Seymour Gelber was appointed to the Commission on Ethics in 2005 by the Chief Judge of the Eleventh Circuit. Judge Gelber was a senior judge with the Circuit Court, Juvenile Division. Following retirement from the Circuit Court, he served as an Administrative Court judge, Juvenile Division. Subsequent to his work on the bench, Judge Gelber was elected mayor of the City of Miami Beach, holding office there from 1991 to 1997.

Judge Gelber's volunteer work includes membership on the Miami Beach Charter Review Committee and the School Board Committee on Ethics, as well as chair of Friends of the Miami Beach Regional Library. Additionally, Judge Gelber supports several children's issues through projects he heads as president of the Dade County Boys Club After-Care Program, as chairman emeritus of the Miami-Dade Criminal Justice Council, and as a member of the American Bar Association Committee on Juvenile Justice. Judge Gelber also holds executive positions at Florida International University's College of Urban and Public Affairs and College of Education, Miami-Dade Magnet Schools program.



## **BRENDA RIVERA**

Brenda Rivera was appointed in 2004 by the Dean of St. Thomas University School of Law. As an adjunct professor there, she directs and teaches in the family court and criminal placement clinics. Additionally, Ms. Rivera is a Senior Supervising Attorney for the Legal Aid Society of the Public Service Office of the Dade County Bar Association. Ms. Rivera supervises the domestic violence division and is responsible for implementing, developing, and overseeing new programs to serve victims in Miami-Dade.

Ms. Rivera received her B.S. degree from Florida International University and her Juris Doctorate degree from St. Thomas University School of Law.

## **ROBERT MEYERS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

Robert Meyers has served as Executive Director of the Ethics Commission since 1998. He regularly addresses audiences on the topic of government and ethics—frequently appearing on local television programs and on panels sponsored by municipalities, chambers of commerce, bar associations, and universities.

Prior to his appointment at the Ethics Commission, Mr. Meyers was a professor at the University of Tennessee, where he taught courses in criminal law, legal ethics, government law, and public administration. He is frequently published in local newspapers, and his article titled “Professionalism and the Practice of Ethics in Local Land Use Planning” has been published in an environmental law treatise.

Mr. Meyers holds a B.A. degree from the University of Florida, a Master’s degree in Public Administration from Florida International University, and a Juris Doctorate degree from the University of Miami School of Law.

# STAFF & BUDGET

---

The Ethics Commission operates in four major areas:

**Advice-Giving**  
**Ethics Code Enforcement**  
**Education and Community Outreach**  
**Legislative Analysis and Review**

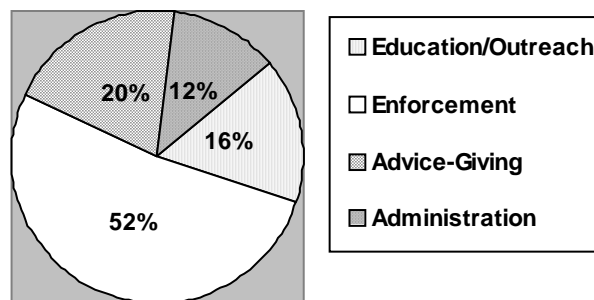
In 2005, the Ethics Commission issued 140 opinions and 196 responses to inquiries, with no additional personnel. Staff duties were adjusted to expand community outreach efforts. This refocusing was in response to an increased demand from both public and private sectors for ethics training, conferences, and workshops. An additional investigator was hired to enable the Ethics Commission to devote more time to complex investigations and to ensure compliance with advisory opinions. Moreover, the bulk of the post-election audit work was performed, with the release of eight audits.

## BUDGET

The Ethics Commission staff in 2005 included 15 employees and two independent contractors. The contractors were hired to assist with the 2004 post-election audits of candidates for County Mayor and for the County Commission who received funding from the Election Campaign Financing Trust Fund.

### Budget Breakdown

2005- 2006



These percentages reflect personnel costs, which comprise the majority of the Ethics Commission general budget of \$1.8 million. Approximately \$235,000 is budgeted for training materials, office supplies, and equipment.

# EDUCATION & OUTREACH

---

A major focus of the Ethics Commission for 2005 was to increase citizen understanding and participation in governmental accountability efforts. Several projects were part of this extensive and proactive community education and outreach campaign.

## WORKSHOPS, CONFERENCES, FORUMS

***Ethics and the Media Conference.*** In December 2005, a one-day conference for South Florida journalists, government officials, and public relations professionals was sponsored by the Miami-Dade Commission on Ethics, Florida International University, the Society of Professional Journalists South Florida Chapter, and The Miami Herald. The keynote speaker for the event was former Miami Herald Columnist Edward Wasserman, a Knight Professor of Journalism Ethics at Washington & Lee University. Over 200 individuals attended.

***Fourth Annual Environmental Ethics Conference.*** In February 2005, representatives from government and the community joined educators from the Miami-Dade County Commission on Ethics, Florida Atlantic University, the University of Miami, and Miami-Dade College in a day-long conference titled “Living on the Edge: South Florida’s Environmental Future.” The keynote speaker was Richard Pettigrew, a former member of Florida’s House of Representatives and former chair of Audubon of Florida.

***Candidate Ethics Forums.*** To foster ethical leadership and to help the electorate identify where candidates stand on ethical issues affecting local governments, the Commission on Ethics held nine “Ethics Forums” during the 2004-2005 election cycle. Candidates for County Mayor, County Commission, school board, and municipal officers were invited to join the public for discussions focusing exclusively on ethical issues in government. In general, the Ethics Forums were spirited and well attended. Many were taped for rebroadcast on the government’s access channels.

***Campaign Finance Seminar.*** In 2005, the Ethics Commission, the Miami-Dade County Elections Department, and the State Attorney’s Office held workshops on running for office. These seminars provided information on campaign contributions, the Ethical Campaign Practices Ordinance, post-election audits, prohibited uses of public funds, and other requirements related to expending public funds.

***Cable-Tap Television Series.*** The Ethics Coalition sponsored a series of ethics discussions on Cable-Tap, an ongoing public access television program. This six-part series consisted of information on the following topics: Watchdogs, Conflicts of Interest, Procurement Ethics, Business/Nonprofit Ethics, Ethics and Elections, and Ethics and Education.

***Luncheons for Municipal Attorneys and Clerks.*** Municipal attorneys joined Executive Director Robert Meyers and the Ethics Commission legal staff at a November luncheon to learn more about two recent amendments to the Ethics Code. Participants earned 1.5 continuing legal education credits. Earlier in October, the legal staff from the Ethics Commission met with municipal clerks to discuss rules governing city employees accepting outside employment.

***Retreat for Ethics Commission and Staff.*** The Ethics Commissioners and staff met for a one-day retreat in May 2005 to brainstorm and set goals for the next several years. The Commission determined that policy changes were necessary to improve the effectiveness of the Ethics Commission. These amendments will be pursued in 2006.

***Miscellaneous Presentations.*** The Commission on Ethics continues to make presentations regarding the work of our agency and issues of local concern before nonprofit, professional, and private organizations, local chambers of commerce, and area colleges and universities. The Commission maintains an active role in national ethics consortiums, professional associations, and academic networks. At the local level, Ethics Commission staff regularly attend, support, and speak at events sponsored by the Miami-Dade City and County Management Association, the Miami-Dade County Municipal Clerks Association, and the Miami-Dade League of Cities. Additionally, the Executive Director was invited to speak at the annual conferences of the Florida League of Cities as well as the Florida Municipal Attorneys Association, the National Transportation Initiatives, and the National League of Cities.

## **TRAINING**

The Ethics Commission continued training projects in the following areas:

***Ongoing Ethics Training for Citizens and Agencies.*** The Commission on Ethics provides training for advisory boards, community councils, and private and professional organizations. Groups can obtain additional information or schedule training sessions by contacting the Ethics Commission's Outreach Coordinator.

***Mandatory Training for County Advisory Boards.*** The Board of County Commissioners passed a resolution requiring members of all County boards to complete ethics training conducted by the Commission on Ethics. This 90-minute course included a presentation on the Sunshine Law, the Public Records Act, and the County's Conflict of Interest and Code of Ethics Ordinance. The training began in February 2005 and has been extended into the next year. During 2005, approximately 800 board members participated in 123 sessions.

***Municipal Ethics Training.*** The Ethics Commission provides a two-hour overview of the Code of Ethics to all elected municipal officials within the County. Because this training has proven popular for municipal employees, community agencies, and

local advisory boards as well, attendance at municipal ethics training workshops has increased 20% during the past year.

***Initial County Ethics Training and Refresher Courses.*** During 2005, new case studies and testing materials to reflect the recent amendments to the Code of Ethics Ordinance were incorporated into the mandatory ethics training for all new employees in Miami-Dade County. Participation has risen significantly in both the initial courses as well as ongoing refresher courses.

***Lobbyists' Workshops.*** In response to amendments to the Lobbying Registration and Reporting Rules, the Ethics Commission staff held several workshops for lobbyists, County personnel, and other affected parties in 2005.

## **COLLABORATIONS**

The Commission operates under the principle that community collaboration is fundamental to the success of our outreach and education campaign. The following are some examples of our collaborative efforts:

***Model Student Ethics Commission Program.*** The Model Student Ethics Commission Program encourages students to analyze ethical dilemmas through role playing and other interactive techniques. Affiliating with the Miami-Dade Public Schools and its Ethics Advisory Committee has enabled us to introduce this program to three additional area high schools. In 2005, the Model Student Ethics Commission Program was the only one recognized from the United States by Transparency International for outstanding ethics initiatives for students. The same program also received a 2005 Achievement Award from the National Association of Counties.

***Miami-Dade County Ethics Officers' Program.*** The Ethics Commission was successful in recommending that Miami-Dade County create the position of Ethics Officer within County government. Currently, the Ethics Commission plays a significant role in training the Ethics Officers, primarily by disseminating information and leading discussions regarding ethics opinions that involve County personnel at the Ethics Officers' quarterly meetings.

***Civility Initiative.*** The Ethics Commission, along with the County's Independent Review Panel and the Community Relations Board, embarked on a project to restore civility in government assemblies. Joint meetings were held in 2005, with a goal of offering civility training in 2006.

## **PUBLICATIONS**

***Conflict of Interest and Code of Ethics Ordinance,*** as amended through April 2005. The Commission on Ethics provides the most current version of the Ethics Ordinance at its website at [www.miamidade.gov/ethics](http://www.miamidade.gov/ethics).



***A Community's Resolve to Restore Accountability, Integrity, and Public Trust.*** The findings of the Ethics Coalition regarding ethics and anti-corruption efforts in Miami-Dade County continue to serve as a reference for researchers, academicians, civic and business leaders, law enforcement officials, and interested citizens both within and beyond the County. The report, titled "A Community's Resolve to Restore Accountability, Integrity, and Public Trust: The Miami-Dade Experience (1996–Present)," was initially published in 2004 and remains available for downloading on the Commission on Ethics website at [www.miamidade.gov/ethics](http://www.miamidade.gov/ethics).

***The New Ethics Beat.*** The Ethics Commission publishes a newsletter titled *The New Ethics Beat*, which features a column by the Executive Director as well as articles about recent Ethics Commission opinions, legislative changes, training opportunities, conferences, seminars, and workshops. The December 2005 issue is available on the Commission on Ethics website at [www.miamidade.gov/ethics](http://www.miamidade.gov/ethics).

***National League of Cities Magazine.*** In conjunction with a Leadership Institute facilitated by the Executive Director, the National League of Cities published an article on Government Advocacy written by the Executive Director and the staff attorney. The article was distributed to members of the National League of Cities attending the League's 2005 conference in Washington, D.C.

# **ENFORCEMENT PROCEDURE**

---

## **FILING A COMPLAINT**

Citizens can register a grievance with the Ethics Commission by submitting a written notarized complaint executed on a form prescribed by the Ethics Commission. The complaint must allege a violation within the jurisdiction of the Ethics Commission, be based on substantial personal knowledge of the complainant, and include as much evidence as possible. Within 30 days after receipt of the complaint, the Ethics Commission shall send a copy of the complaint to the alleged violator.

In addition, citizens can leave information and tips anonymously on the Commission on Ethics hotline at (305) 579-9093. The legal unit of the Commission on Ethics reviews this information, and the Advocate may, in good faith, file a complaint based on the information provided, even in the absence of personal knowledge. The Advocate is also authorized to initiate complaints without citizen initiative.

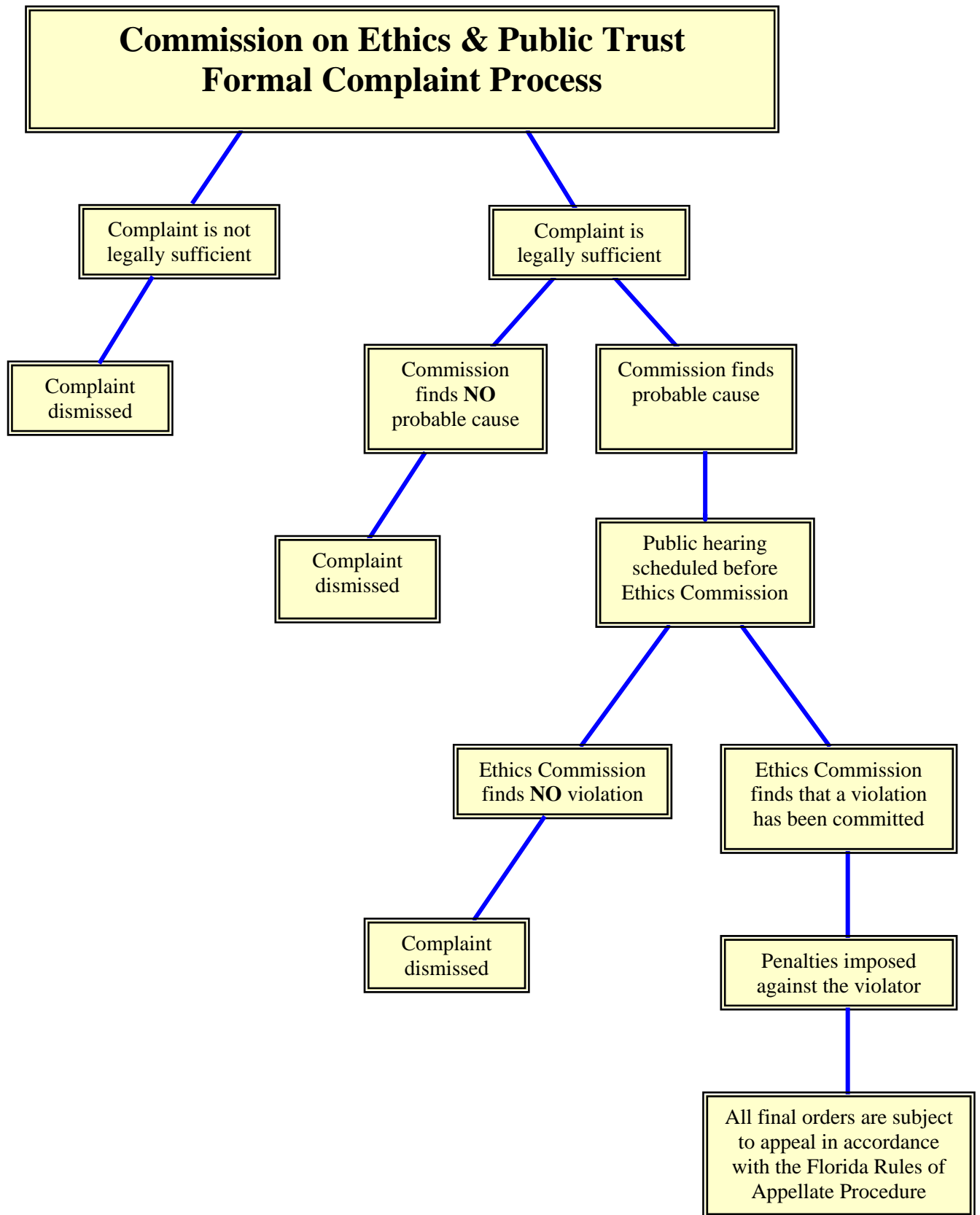
The Ethics Commission does not hear complaints involving County personnel or other matters that require the complainant to exhaust municipal remedies first.

## **QUASI-JUDICIAL PROCESS**

Section 2-1074 of the Miami-Dade County Code outlines the process and powers for conducting investigations. The Ethics Commission is empowered to subpoena, audit, and investigate all facts and persons materially related to the complaint at issue.

If the Commission finds no probable cause that a violation has been committed, it shall dismiss the complaint and issue a report to the complainant and alleged violator. However, if the Ethics Commission finds probable cause, it shall notify the alleged violator and the complainant of the determination and schedule a public hearing.

Penalties may include fines, letters of instruction, reprimand, restitution, and other consequences imposed by law. All final orders may be appealed pursuant to the Florida Rules of Appellate Procedure. The following chart illustrates the process.



# ADVICE-GIVING ACTIONS

---

Anyone within the jurisdiction of the Ethics Commission may submit a written Request for an Opinion (RQO) or an Inquiry as to the proper interpretation or applicability of ordinances within the Ethics Commission's purview. The request must pertain to the particular facts of the individual's situation. In 2005, the Ethics Commission issued 336 advisory opinions and responses to inquiries.

## SUMMARY OF 140 REQUESTS FOR OPINIONS

CODE §	ISSUES	NO. OF CASES*
(b)	Definitions of Terms	5
(c)	Doing Business with One's Government	82
(d)	Voting Conflicts	6
(e)	Gifts	2
(g)	Exploitation of Official Position	4
(h)	Confidential Information	2
(i)	Financial Disclosure	2
(j)	Conflicting Employment	10
(k)	Outside Employment/Disclosure Requirements	1
(m)	Appearances before Government	3
(n)	Taking Official Action with Financial Interests	5
(o)	Acquiring Financial Interest	2
(p)	Recommending Professional Services	1
(q)	Two-year Rule	2
(s)	Lobbying	4
(v)	Voting Conflicts on Advisory Boards	5
(w)	Prohibition on Accepting Travel Expenses from Vendors	1
(x)	Prohibition on County Employees and Departmental Personnel Performing Contract-related Duties	1
Other	Contracting	11
	Citizen's Bill of Rights	1
	Section 2-1074 Miami Dade County Code	1
	Section 1.14-Notice to Professional Consultants	1

*\*Some requests apply to more than one provision of the Code.*

# INQUIRIES SUMMARY

---

Inquiries are informal advisory opinions rendered by the Ethics Commission legal staff and reviewed by the Executive Director. Oftentimes, officials or personnel may have questions that require immediate assistance, such as a pending issue regarding a voting conflict. An inquiry is rendered only when the issue is one that the Ethics Commission has formally addressed in previous opinions.

## SUMMARY OF 196 INQUIRIES RENDERED

CODE §	ISSUES	NO. OF CASES*
(b)	Definition of Terms	8
(c)	Doing Business with the Government	16
(d)	Voting Conflicts	60
(e)	Gifts	22
(g)	Exploitation of Official Position	5
(h)	Confidential Information	3
(i)	Financial Disclosure	7
(j)	Conflicting Employment	5
(k)	Outside Employment/Disclosure Requirements	32
(m)	Appearances before Government	7
(n)	Taking Official Action with Financial Interests	1
(o)	Acquiring Financial Interest	1
(p)	Recommending Professional Services	1
(q)	Two-year Rule	9
(s)	Lobbying	22
(t)	Cone of Silence	5
(v)	Voting Conflicts on Advisory Boards	24
(w)	Prohibition on Accepting Travel Expenses from Vendors	12
(x)	Prohibition on County Employees and Departmental Personnel Performing Contract-related Duties	1
Other	Contracting/Miscellaneous	14

*\*Some requests apply to more than one provision of the Code.*



# ENFORCEMENT SUMMARY

---

## COMPLAINTS FILED

The following individuals and agencies filed 36 complaints in 2005.

County Ethics Commission Advocate	17
State Attorney's Office	1
Public at-large	18

The following summarizes the outcome of the 36 cases filed in 2005.\*

Dismissed for lack of probable cause after the initial investigation	4
Dismissed for legal insufficiency	11
Dismissed in the interests of justice	3
Issuance of Letters of Instruction	1
No Contest pleas and/or settlement	15
Pending	1
Withdrawal of Complaint	1

*\*Some cases resulted in more than one administrative action.*

## INVESTIGATIONS INITIATED

The Advocate's investigative staff opened 121 investigations during 2005. These investigations were initiated in response to formal complaints, anonymous letters, "hotline" calls, newspaper articles, confidential informants, and other sources.

# LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITIES & INITIATIVES

---

The Ethics Commission has the authority and responsibility to review County and municipal ethics laws and recommend changes that support fairness, openness, and transparency in government. With this in mind, the Commission actively participated in legislative activities in 2005, with the following results:

***Prohibition on acceptance of travel expenses from County vendors.*** The County Ethics Ordinance was amended to bar governmental officials and employees from accepting travel expenses or travel-related expenses from County vendors, service providers, contractors, or bidders.

***Restitution.*** The Ethics Commission was given authority to impose restitution against a party who violates one of the ordinances within its purview.

***Gifts solicitation on behalf of nonprofit agencies.*** The gift section of the County Ethics Ordinance was amended to permit local elected officials to solicit gifts on behalf of nonprofit organizations if neither the elected officials nor their staffs receive any compensation as a result of the solicitations.

# GOALS FOR 2006

---

## **EDUCATION AND OUTREACH STRATEGY**

- Collaborate with Miami-Dade League of Cities to offer more programs to newly elected local public officials and managers.
- Offer a civility workshop.
- Continue to conduct ethics training for all County board members.
- Hold several campaign seminars.
- Host a major Ethics Conference in the Fall of 2006.
- Further expand the Model Student Ethics Commission Program.
- Organize a Brown Bag Ethics Lunch Series.
- Redesign the Ethics Commission website to include comprehensive information, accessible in a user-friendly format.
- Continue to participate in the County Ethics Officers' Program.
- Prepare a comprehensive study of campaign finance issues.

## **ENFORCEMENT OBJECTIVES**

- Release the remaining post-election audits prepared pursuant to the requirements of the County Election Campaign Financing Trust Fund Ordinance.
- Take on more complex investigations in conjunction with an increase of investigative resources.
- Monitor more of the Conflict of Interest opinions issued to construction contractors and subcontractors.
- Allocate more resources to the investigation and enforcement of outside employment activities of County and municipal personnel.
- Better utilize the Citizens' Bill of Rights to fight ethical misconduct in local government.
- Refer more complaints to the Florida Elections Commission.

## **LEGISLATIVE EFFORTS**

- Advocate for increased accountability in procurement and purchasing activities.
- Increase the amount of fines the Ethics Commission can impose.
- Establish an expedited hearing process for specified complaints.
- Amend sections of the Lobbyist Registration and Reporting Ordinance to require more disclosure as well as carve out a general public meetings exception.
- Participate in discussions related to procurement reform and the Cone of Silence.
- Renew support of fee disclosure for lobbyists.
- Recommend a local enforcement mechanism for local campaign finance laws that are currently unregulated by the state.

## **ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

- Hire a minimum of two additional employees to handle increased workload—one in community outreach and a second employee in the audit/enforcement area.
- Purchase a case tracking system to create greater office efficiencies.

## **MIAMI-DADE COMMISSION ON ETHICS & PUBLIC TRUST**

---

19 West Flagler Street, Suite 209  
Miami, FL 33130

Main Number: (305) 579-2594  
Fax Number: (305) 579-0273  
Hotline: (305) 579-9093  
Request a Speaker: (305) 350-0630  
e-mail: [ethics@miamidade.gov](mailto:ethics@miamidade.gov)

### **COMMISSION MEMBERS**

Kerry E. Rosenthal, Chair  
Gail A. Dotson, Vice-Chair  
Dawn E. Addy  
Judge Seymour Gelber  
Brenda Rivera

### **STAFF MEMBERS**

Robert Meyers, Executive Director  
Ardyth Walker, Staff General Counsel  
Michael Murawski, Advocate  
Miriam Ramos, Assistant Advocate  
Victoria Frigo, Staff Attorney  
Manuel Diaz, Lead Investigator  
Sylvia Batista, Investigator  
Yolanda Bielovucic, Investigator  
Arthur Skinner, Investigator  
Karl Ross, Investigator  
Kennedy Rosario, Investigator  
Christina Topley, Auditor  
Rodzandra Sanchez, Community Outreach Specialist  
Rachelle Cedeno, Administrative Assistant  
Robert Thompson, Community Outreach Coordinator